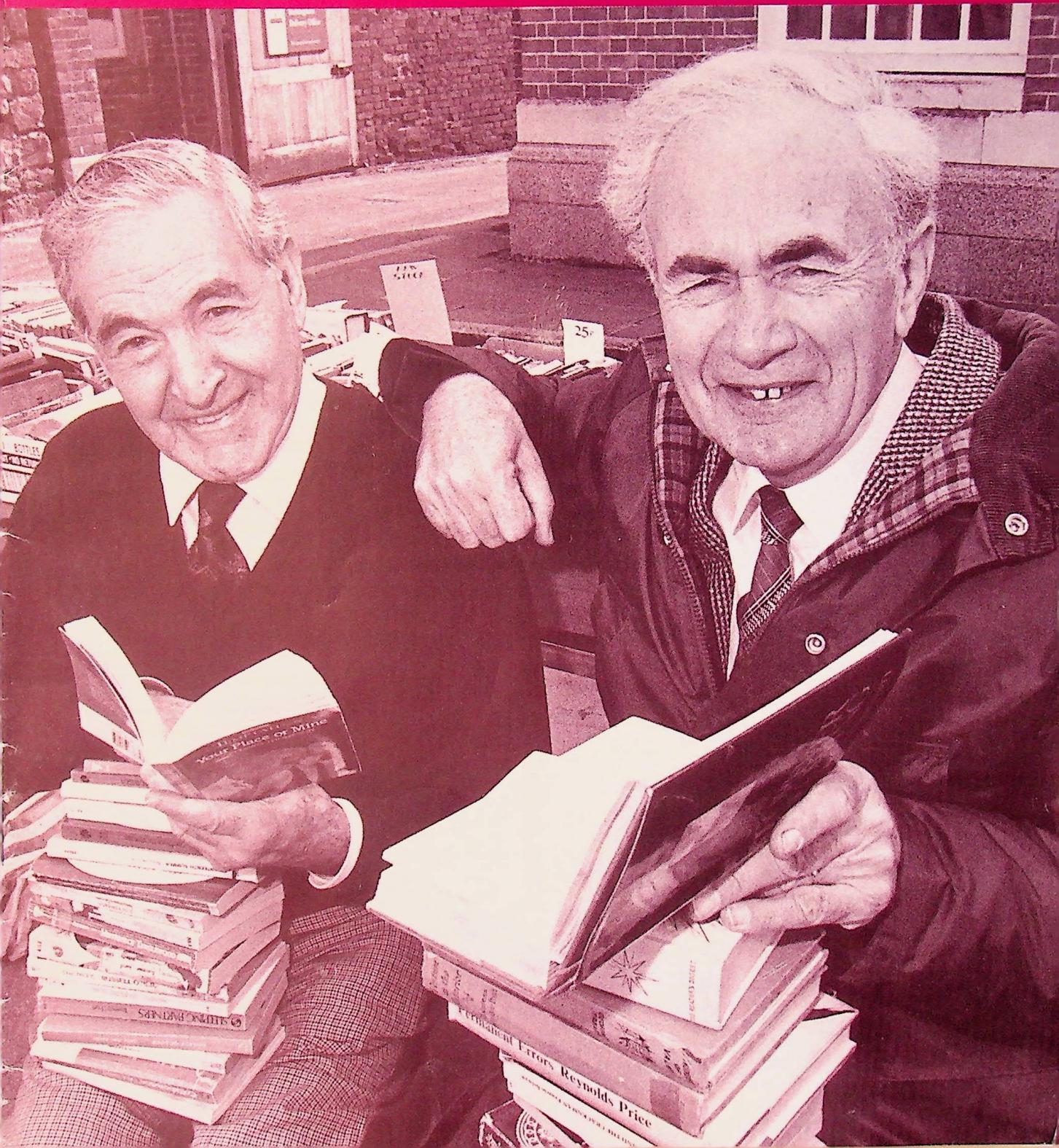


Point

three

May 1995

The magazine of TOCH



Point three

The Magazine of Toc H

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Revd P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. *To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.*
2. *To give personal service.*
3. *To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.*
4. *To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.*

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world, as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points. Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, at the address below.

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

Point three is available from Toc H Headquarters. Price: 30p per copy or £3.60 per annum. Any contribution towards the high cost of postage will be gratefully accepted.

Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT
Tel: 01296 623911.
Fax: 01296 696137.

Editor: Ruth Boyd

Editorial Assistant: Jenny Small

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Unlikely Role Models

We have all seen the little boy walking by his father, imitating the way he walks. We have all heard the little girl using phrases and intonations derived from her mother. Our behaviour, as well as most of our values, is largely derived from others. From an early age we seek to imitate - sometimes consciously, often unconsciously - the behaviour of those we love and admire. Predominantly these are parents, but many others can be such 'role models' - teachers, clergy, national leaders, sports personalities and so forth.

Christianity, to me, is simply adopting Jesus as a role model. As Sue Cumming (who was, incidentally, made a priest at Nottingham in March) wrote some years ago, *we are challenged in Toc H, to consider and try to live out the simple, impossible standards of Jesus the man, and see where it leads us!* Whatever we believe about his 'divine' nature, or his origins, or even what happened after his crucifixion, his life and values as a human being shine through as an example fit to set before anyone. For me Christianity is, first and foremost, a humble attempt to live like that, even if I get it wrong again and again.

But we all have other role models. As we move into our acts of commemoration and commitment this year, which we are calling *Share the Peace*, I am reminded of an old man I once knew in Toc H, called Sid Thresher. An unassuming, poorly educated man who finished the Great War as he started it - a private! Yet he made friends across the whole class spectrum of his time, and especially with the young.

In the early 1920s, he was one of a small band of Toc H members, led by Barclay Baron, who decided 'to make friends with the Germans' - and this at a time when that was not at all popular. They built links with German communities, they brought badly malnourished German children to the UK for healthy holidays, they did many other things to try and redress the legacy of hatred and build bridges.

As the years went by, the youngsters grew up. Sid retained the friendship of many, including a number who rose to senior rank in the Wehrmacht and, only three days before war broke out in 1939, Sid was hosting two of them at his home...and they only went back when their ambassador personally telephoned Sid and asked to speak to these young men.

Sid admitted that he was heart-broken by the start of the War. All their efforts seemed to have failed. What had been achieved? Yet, in 1943, a badly injured British soldier, repatriated because of his wounds, sought out Sid in Guildford during his convalescence, and brought him a message entrusted to him by a senior German officer. It was, 'Tell him he was the best friend I ever had'. Sid had very successfully *shared the peace* - by quietly making friends with others' enemies, regardless of the world's opinion or approval. I would very humbly set him alongside Jesus as a role model for our own attempts to *Share the Peace*...even though he would probably have killed me for even suggesting such blasphemy!

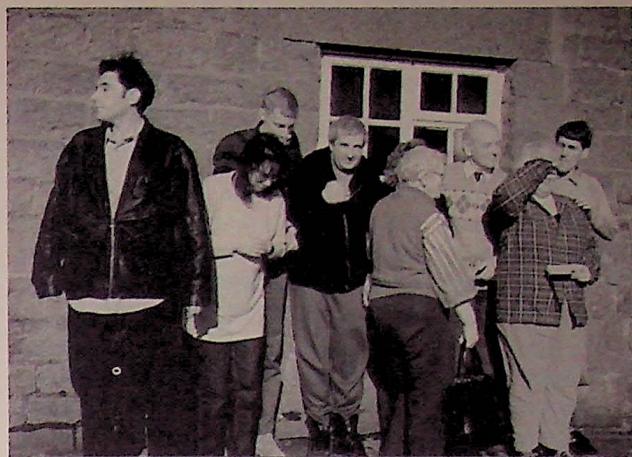
John Mitchell

Introduction To Toc H

This was the name of a project which took place at Colsterdale, North Yorkshire, on a weekend in February, led by staff members Marilyn Surtees and Norah Phipps. Why do a project on Toc H you ask? Well, in Cleveland we decided that we were already involving lots of people who were going on numerous projects, CAMEOs and other Toc H activities, and we wanted to spend time, without distractions, in explaining what Toc H is, answer any questions, and encourage the participants to see what Toc H could mean for them. This resulted in a decision to have a project solely on Toc H. Then we waited and worried in case no one would apply. Oh how faithless we can be - we were over-subscribed and had to turn people away.

In good Toc H tradition, we had a real mixture of people. Some members came along, still feeling that they needed to find out even more about the Movement, as well as contributing to the discussion. Other participants had been on the fringe of our activities for quite a while, then there were others who had only been involved for a few weeks or months, and two people who were completely new to Toc H. The mixture of ages was from late teens to over 70, which obviously covered a wide variety of experiences of life.

The programme for the weekend was centred around the Four Points of the Compass, relating them to what we were doing on the weekend, and showing how other Toc H activities also fitted in with them.



On the Sunday morning, following reflections, there was a powerful comment from one participant new to Toc H, which seemed very memorable:

'I have never mixed with such a wide group of people, and everyone got on together. I had nothing in common with most of you on Friday, but now I realise that the differences between us do not mean we cannot get on.'

Part of the message of Toc H had got over to everyone without us even needing to point it out!

In a follow-up meeting, for people to give examples of how to get more involved, we were gratified when all the participants came along and even brought some friends. Focusing on Toc H had been a risk well worth taking.

Norah Phipps



Reconciliation

80th Birthday Lecture - A Challenge For All

'Lord Owen's speech was very informative and challenging', wrote one guest following the Toc H Lecture on April 5. 'I enjoyed meeting your colleagues and finding out more about your work', he continued.

These remarks sum up the many positive comments that we have received from those who attended our first national event marking Toc H's 80th Birthday.

Lord Owen, accompanied by Lady Owen, delivered a cleverly crafted Lecture on the theme of Reconciliation, drawing on historical precedents as far back as the English Civil War through to comparable situations in our world today. Lord Owen further added warmth and colour to his presentation by sharing his own personal perspective, born out of his experiences in government and his recent work in the former States of Yugoslavia, representing the European Union and working with Cyrus Vance of the United States.

It is impossible through this article to recreate the atmosphere on board HMS Belfast, or to give a full flavour of the Lecture itself. For those who would like to study Lord Owen's speech, it is available in printed form on request. A donation of £2.50 would be

appreciated to cover the cost of printing and postage. We can also make available, in limited supply, a cassette recording, for which a donation of £4 would be appreciated, again to cover the cost of materials and distribution.

Following the Lecture, there was a Reception on board HMS Belfast - giving an opportunity for the Toc H team of staff and members to make friends with our guests and to share with them something of Toc H's work and needs. Our guests represented a wide range of voluntary organisations, governmental departments, business and institutions - and from immediate comments received there was no doubt in our minds that the evening had not only been successful, but had made a deep impression upon all concerned. We are now actively in following up each guest, in the hope that the interest expressed on the evening can be turned into practical support for the Movement. Lord and Lady Owen were magnificent in the way that they circulated and helped to cement those all-important relationships. Was it a success? I guess the answer to that is simply to say that we shall be holding another Lecture next year.

Mike Lyddiard



The following excerpts are taken from Lord Owen's speech:

It is an individual decision whether to forgive, to forget or what blend of each suits his or her temperament. Remembering and forgetting are part of reconciling. Reconciliation is easier for those who do not lose a war and harder for those who may not have lost but who had the humiliation of being occupied. We all choose our own individual pattern; there is no right or wrong way, no general rule of how to think or act. It depends on one's own circumstances, one's own nature. The state cannot and should not attempt to abrogate to itself the task of being the reconciler for its citizens. I am not even convinced it can give more than a lead in what is a process of reconciliation that has to go far wider and deeper than governments.

Reconciliation is a noble theme, one to which much thought has been given and much experience gained over the centuries. There is a role in the process of reconciliation for Monarchs, Presidents and Governments, but above all it is the citizens who set the pace of reconciliation and determine its quality. If Government listens only to the loud voices they may miss the quiet wisdom of those who consider vengeance is a mechanism for sowing the seeds of future violence and more wars.

In Europe we are still grappling with the process of reconciliation in the aftermath of the Nazi's genocide of around 11 million Jews. Perhaps, because of Europe's sophisticated, well developed, legal system, reconciliation has tended to be set within a legal framework. Justice, not vengeance, was the cry around which a broad measure of agreement was reached in dealing with Nazi crimes.

In the UK we have recently had an important debate over the concept of whether justice, not in a spirit of revenge or retribution, must always live on. The House of Commons had to decide whether to introduce a War Crimes Bill. I and some others voted against in a Free Vote, but a majority voted in favour.

The dilemma of reconciliation is that if justice is to be an absolute then there can be no pardons or amnesties. Yet over many centuries different countries have determined that the need for justice should be capable of being overridden by the need for reconciliation. Some argue that this particularly applies in civil wars. But it is not always easy to make a clear cut distinction between wars of aggression and civil wars. This is very much the case in the former Yugoslavia where there have, since 1991, been at least four distinct wars.

I believe that demonstrating to the world again that there are international laws governing individual conduct during war will contribute to the process of reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia and send a wider message to the world as a whole. I believe it was necessary to deal with genocide and crimes in Rwanda,

but I regret that the Security Council still felt it necessary to establish a Rwanda specific court rather than establish an international court of universal application. But I hope that the experience gained from dealing with the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda will provide the basis for an early United Nations decision to set up a permanent International Court for trying people suspected of war crimes, genocide and other crimes against humanity and I believe that such a decision would have the effect of making it less likely that such crimes will be committed in the future.

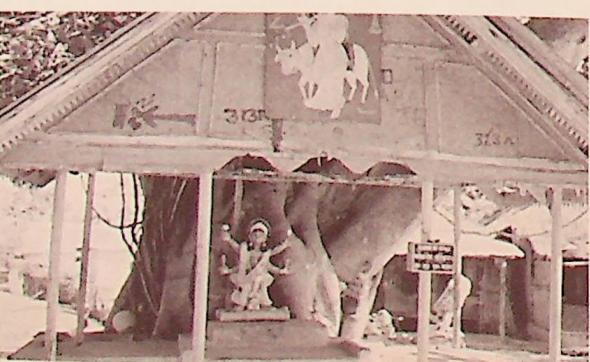
I was very impressed by the wisdom shown by the Polish Government in inviting all the countries of the former Yugoslavia to the 50th Anniversary of the ending of the horror of the Auschwitz concentration camp. No doubt some in the Polish Government were tempted not to ask the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), which Poland like most other members of the UN has not formally recognised. But to do this would have been to visit the sins of the sons on their fathers. Poland who suffered, after the Soviet Union, the most casualties of the Allied forces must have been conscious that the Yugoslavs, mostly Serbs, suffered the third most casualties in that war and that in the Nazi and Croatian Ustasha concentration camps there was a massive genocide against the Serbs.

The British government was, I believe, right to listen to the views of ex-servicemen who fought in South East Asia who did not wish to abandon the term VJ Day which we have used for fifty years. But their voice, however loud, cannot always be the determining factor. His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, who fought in the Pacific during that war, showed courage and won respect for being ready to represent the Queen at the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. The ex-servicemen in the West country who criticised the decision that Toshiba should build factories in Plymouth 15 years ago were listened to with respect but did not carry the day, and now there is hardly a person who regrets that decision and the Japanese management are welcomed and appreciated. It is as people learn more about each other's countries and cultures that reconciliation puts down its roots. My children know a modern democratic Germany and Japan within which they have travelled and lived with ease and enjoyment. My generation forgives Germany and Japan but does not forget. My father, who recently died, served as a doctor in the Royal Army Medical Corp in France, North Africa and Italy. He was the mildest of men, but he neither forgot nor forgave Germany or the Japanese for what that war did to him and his generation.

Such is the reconciliation process. The sins of the fathers must not be visited on their sons, least of all on their grandsons. Of one thing we can be certain. There will never, as long as the European Union remains in being to bind us together, be another war between Germany and Austria and the United Kingdom and France.

Return to

During my recent six week visit to Bangladesh, I had time to see some of the area that surrounds Sylhet. Srimongul, a neighbouring district to the south, was a fascinating insight into the tea industry, while Jaflong,

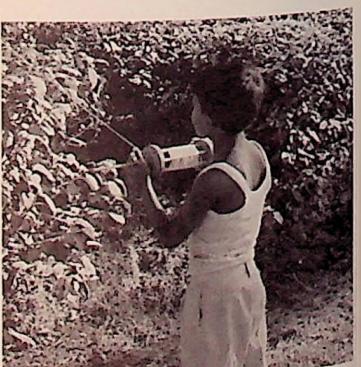


Srimongul - The trip began fairly early and involved the confusion of getting across Sylhet and over Keane Bridge - easily as difficult as trying to get across London in the rush hour. Having got to the relevant bus station and bought our tickets (I went with Johnny Sandish, who was going to sort out some family business), we had to wait about 20 minutes before the bus left. Surprisingly, it left on time! I should have predicted that life could not be so straightforward. We had been travelling less than an hour when the bus broke down - the clutch having packed up. Thankfully it chose a moment when we were at a bus stop and not racing along the road. Travel, particularly on public transport, is somewhat hazardous. The buses are old and have been re-cobbled time and again. MOT tests and driving licences don't exist and the highway code is simple - the bigger and faster you are, the greater your right of way. In the event of an accident, the poorest driver is beaten up, assuming he is still alive or hasn't run away. The roads are often narrow, with a steep decline on either side, so there is little room for error. When two lorries pass, I'm convinced that the only reason there isn't a crash is because somehow the vehicles shrink! It's the only logical explanation.

Eventually, having caught another bus, we arrived in Srimongul town and went to visit Johnny's aunt - at the Trade Union Office for the tea estate workers. Then through the bazaar to the Tea Gardens. The Gardens are run by the Finlay Tea Company, a Scottish firm which exports tea for blending.

How can I explain the experience? We went by rickshaw into the Gardens and the tea bushes just spread out before us and all around us for miles. Sometimes they were cropped back because the picking was finished, sometimes they still had the young light-green tips of the fresh shoots on the bushes, and then there was the smell.... Well, a tea smell such as you get from a newly opened packet of tea; not that dry, roasted smell, but fresh, like newly cut grass - a 'green' smell!

We saw Hindu temples and shrines along the road, as most of the workers on this estate are Hindu. A tree had sacred stones carefully placed at the base. Here, trees are honoured for their spirits and are treated with enormous respect because of the power they hold. Many live in fear of the ghosts that they believe to live in the oldest trees, thinking that they might cast some evil spell on them. At one place we saw women gathering up thatch



Bangladesh

Shripur, Madhabkunda and Katal Khair gave me a chance to see some of the more beautiful parts of Bangladesh and to experience the rural part of the country first hand.

to make a roof for a house. House building in Bangladesh is nearly always a communal effort; here at least a sense of community is alive and well.

As we walked back towards the town, we saw an 'open air' school running in the shade of a Hindu place of prayer and, next to it, a primary school built by the tea workers themselves. We passed a group of boys flying home-made kites in the tea garden. They are very adept at flying the kites, which were almost too small to see because they were so far away and high in the sky.

Everyone we encountered that day was incredibly friendly and, even though the conditions for the workers on this estate are better than some, nevertheless it gave new meaning to the words 'cash crop'. So little has changed for the poorest people in Bangladesh since the days of the British Empire - they are still being exploited for their labour so that we British can continue to enjoy our 'cuppa'.

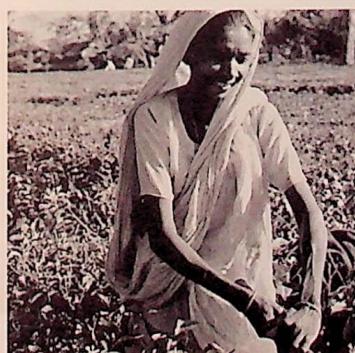
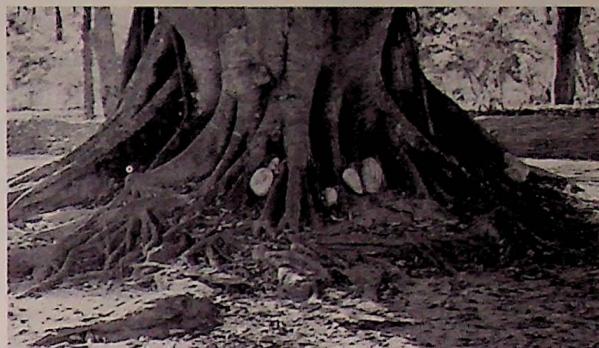
Another day visit took me to **Jaflong**, on the northern border with Manipur in India, and to nearby **Shripur**, where the water flows straight off the hills of India over rocks and boulders. The water is beautifully cool and very clean, a favourite bathing spot for visitors. - I certainly enjoyed it. On the way back I took a photo of a panoramic view of the paddy fields, dry at the season's end

A week or so later, on my visit to **Madhabkunda** on the eastern border with India, I took a photo of a spectacular view early in the morning. In this area the fields had already been replanted with rice and were a vibrant green. Both pictures show how incredibly flat Bangladesh is, for the most part, and explains why as much as 50% of the land can go under water during flooding.

This seems even more staggering when one considers that Bangladesh has the most dense population per square kilometre of anywhere in the world - nowhere else comes even close!

Madhabkunda is a 'tourist spot' - crowded with people; the rocks around the pool at the bottom of the waterfall had been daubed with graffiti. As it was the dry season, the waterfall itself was unremarkable, although during the rainy season I could imagine it being quite fantastic. Nevertheless, the trip was worth it for a glimpse of the wonderful surrounding hills, which made me feel at home.

Karen Thomson ■



An Experiment in Co

Vice President Don Lockhart was closely involved with the Othona Community as well as with Toc H. Following his death, in 1995, Alan Johnson met up with Othona Community Development Officer, Tony Jaques, to renew the relationship between the organisations and they look forward to working closely together in the future. Tony writes:

Have you had that experience? You meet an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend you haven't seen for years and the thought hits you: 'At one time we might have married! What would life have been like if we had?'

The same can happen with organisations. I belong to the Othona Community, which at one time, in the 1950s, might have become a partner to Toc H, albeit a young and inexperienced one. It never happened, but we still have a lot in common.

From 1950 to 1955 the Chief Anglican Padre of Toc H was a man called Norman Motley. He founded Othona in 1946, and was the leader of our community until his death in 1980. It's no surprise that a merger of Othona and Toc H was considered. Both organisations had been born from wartime experience - in our case the Second World War. Both have a Christian basis, while including many members who have reservations about the beliefs of the church. And both have learnt from experience that *living generously* and *meeting honestly* are the keys to breaking down barriers in our divided world.

A snapshot from a recent summer day at Othona: 20 Somali children arrive for a two-week stay at our centre on the Essex coast - refugees now settled in East London - whose last encounter with the sea was the Indian Ocean. Read their bewildered faces: *What have we let ourselves in for? Who are these people living in huts in a field? When can we go home?*

Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex

This out-of-the-way spot is where Othona first put down roots. Norman Motley wanted somewhere that people could get away from it all and create a temporary community together for a few weeks at a time, but he also dreamed of a place rich in Christian history.

He found it on the edge of the Essex marshes, near what is probably England's oldest functioning church building. Years later he wrote, '*The sense of 13 centuries of prayer was almost overpowering...the moment I entered the building I knew that we were home*'.

The chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall was built in AD 654 by St Cedd and became the hub of a monastic village on the site of an old Roman fort (named Othona). Today, looking like a rough-hewn stone barn, the chapel stands in splendid isolation between the wheat fields and the saltmarshes. But the isolation isn't total. Two fields away, what was Othona's campsite of the 1940s is now a permanent settlement, with huts of various ages and a splendid new building which opened last year.

Othona has always been a community for all ages - we recently had four generations of the same family visiting together - but Bradwell is especially popular with children and young people. There's a strong tradition of visitors from abroad too, with a regular



contingent of German teenagers every year. But again, we're not a youth camp. One of our regulars is a lady of advancing years who cycles to us from Denmark!

From its earliest days Othona had a reputation for bringing together people, not only of various nationalities, but also from very different social backgrounds. That's why we keep our facilities straightforward and our charges low - so that lack of money doesn't prevent anyone from joining in.

In decent weather we enjoy a very outdoor lifestyle, close to nature and close to each other. The sea-wall offers miles of good walks, and by night there's nothing quite like an Othona bonfire on the otherwise deserted beach, with songs and sausages, lights twinkling across the wide estuary, and maybe a moonlight dip if the tide is high.

Most people come for a holiday, so

there's plenty of time for swimming, games, outings and so on. But our daily routine also includes talks or special activities, worship in St Peter's chapel and a modicum of work. We try to take active care of our surroundings - gardening, keeping our older huts in good order and planting literally thousands of trees.

At the height of the summer Bradwell can accommodate 100 people at a time. In other seasons (when tents aren't such a good idea!) that figure is lower, but the new centrally heated building allows us to open all the year round and has improved facilities, especially for disabled visitors. A warden and his family live on site, helped by teams of volunteers. And that's a key feature of Othona at Bradwell - its very survival for half a century shows the power of volunteer effort and ordinary people's dedication to a vision of community.



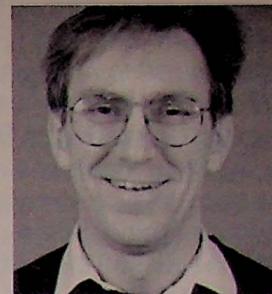
Community by Tony Jaques

The ice is broken, triumphantly, when the young Othona member who is turning 9lbs of flour into our daily bread, gets fully half the boys kneading, or plaiting, or poppy-seeding the child-friendly dough. It's a graphic reminder that jobs which are shared - and enjoyed - can be worth a bookful of pious words.

But what kind of community is Othona? Well for a start, we don't all live together. We are really a scattered network of people, who come together as and when we can, to create a sense of community, whether there are six or 60 of us present. To that end, we run two centres, in Essex and Dorset, where we welcome not only Othona members but anyone - individuals, families or groups - who want a taste of community living.

We've developed a programme in which each holiday week or weekend has its own theme or activity. In 1995 they cover quite a spectrum; from folk music and dance to Japanese cookery; from outdoor work projects to local history weeks; from modern scholarship's insights on the Bible to reflections on living with someone who has severe disabilities.

Just in the last few weeks politicians and pundits have been going on about 'communitarianism'. The concept may be fine, but where are people to get a taste of the real thing while the old 'communities' of workplace and neighbourhood are actually falling apart? We find that a spell at Othona can send us back into the wider society refreshed and with a renewed vision. Which is why for us the experiment of community - not without its difficulties and disappointments you may be sure - is worth pursuing 50 years on.



Burton Bradstock, West Dorset

In the 1960s we were on the lookout for a second centre. (Bradwell was almost too popular for its own good!). Just at the right time we heard of a remarkable house down on the Dorset coast. It had been established in the 1920s by a group of Christian women contemplatives. The last of them had died in 1960 and their house had begun to disappear under a forest of brambles. According to charity law it could not be sold - only given to an organisation with objectives broadly similar to its original community. Was Othona interested? Yes, it was!

Our first reconnaissance party found not just a big stone house, but also four or five timber cottages dotted around in some 10 acres of grounds. The Christian Contemplative Charity, as they were known, had been heavily into self-sufficiency 50 years before it was fashionable. Each sister was meant to support herself on the produce of one acre. There was no electricity, no gas and no WCs - they used earth closets for the ultimate in recycling! For drinking and washing they collected rainwater in huge tanks.

To cut a fascinating story short, Othona took on the challenge. We've made a lot of changes over the years. 'Normal' facilities are now on tap. But we believe Community House still serves a purpose those redoubtable sisters would have applauded.



Drawings by Jen Parker 1995

Nowadays a resident community of half a dozen people live on site and welcome up to 32 visitors at a time. The house has a lovely uncluttered simplicity to it, not least in its chapel where we follow the usual Othona practice. Anyone may offer to lead a service in whatever way he or she sees fit.

Everybody who stays with us joins in community life on an equal basis, helping with simple daily chores and using facilities such as our art and craft block. Since this doubles as a games room there can be a clash if table tennis addicts meet dedicated potters!

Over most of our grounds we aim for a 'controlled wildness', intervening mainly to clear pathways and to replant where trees have died. We are designated a *Site of Nature Conservation Interest*, with valuable habitats for birds and other wildlife, rare grass species and plenty of wild orchids. This year we are

busy reclaiming more of the historic walled garden and orchard, to supply food for our kitchen. There's always outdoor work for any of our visitors who fancy lending a hand.

And the backdrop to all we do is the sea. Community House stands almost alone on an unspoilt stretch of coastline. We overlook the beach with a few hundred yards of National Trust land in between. Sitting quietly in chapel you can find yourself breathing in time to the gentle rise and fall of waves on shingle. And on a sunny day the view from our terrace - with Lyme Regis to the west and Portland Bill to the east - rivals the Mediterranean.

For details of Othona's holidays and projects please write to Tony Jaques-Othona Community House, Coast Road, Burton Bradstock, Bridport, Dorset DT6 4RN.

Farmers and Animal Welfare Activists on a Toc H CAMEO

National Development Officer **David Harrison**, Toc H member **Adina Boardman** and **Mary James** of the National Farmers' Union, arranged a meeting in Bristol on 22 March. Farmers, animal transporters, animal welfare activists, the RSPCA and the police discussed their differences in a Toc H CAMEO. As a result of the meeting, David and Mary gave several local radio interviews and there was also coverage in the local newspapers.



Mary James

Some of the points raised included the reality of farmers and hauliers having to face massive losses and a threat to their livelihood because of the major ferry companies' embargo on the live export of animals. Mary James, a Long Ashton dairy farmer, said that while there were many points on which the sides could not agree, such as journey times for animals, everyone accepted that animals should have the shortest journey possible to the slaughterhouse. She felt that it was remarkable that an opportunity had been found for people to get together and look for common ground. There was unanimous agreement that things were far from perfect and there was an urgent need to find ways of improving the situation.

Mary added: 'We tackled some very fundamental differences between the participants, achieving far more than shouting at each other in a noisy public confrontation. Veal production is a very complex issue and we weren't going to solve all the problems in just one meeting, but at least all sides were looking for answers together and that's got to be good for the welfare of animals.'

Out of the meeting came an agreement that a programme of educational events should be called for, to keep the public better informed on the issues of

animal welfare and the needs of the farming industry. Farmers and protesters called for a joint initiative to improve animal welfare standards across the EU.

Development Officer **Penelope Bayley** attended the CAMEO in her role as a Toc H member and also as a protester against the live export of veal calves. Penelope writes: '*For many nights over the last month I have been down at the Milbay Docks in Plymouth with my dogs. The reason for being there was to protest against the live export of veal calves - it is a subject I feel very strongly about and I only stopped demonstrating when a violent element took over.*

I was left feeling frustrated because, having gone through the "letters to my MP stage", I felt I had nowhere to go to voice my opinions. Then came a phone call from David Harrison, asking if I would attend a meeting in Exeter that he was arranging with the NFU, where people from both sides of the live transport debate would get the chance to air their opinions and listen to the views of the other side.

'I wanted to make sure that the opinions I had were backed with facts, and not just the product of emotion. I spent the evenings before the debate reading up on new ideas and methods, but I was aware that everything I was reading was biased one way or the other, and I was not

getting a balanced view. All the more reason to hear the other side....

'There was quite a strained atmosphere at the venue, with people looking at each other and wondering which side they supported. As it turned out we were a very mixed bunch - farmers, hauliers, veal transporters, vegetarians, animal rights activists, protesters and a representative from the NFU. Things relaxed a lot once the coffee was served. David explained how the debate would be conducted and that he would be attempting to keep each of us to the point and make sure that everyone had their say.

'I soon realised that there were not two sides, but 14, to the discussion - as many as the people present. The group was not made up of people who loved animals and those who were cruel to them, but of different members of the general public - some of whom worked with animals for their living. They too had animal welfare as part of their agenda. I could not agree with a lot that was said, or feel that my idea of animal welfare was anything like theirs. However, if anyone had told me a few weeks beforehand - while I was standing in the freezing cold "fighting for a cause against the baddies", that if I were to talk to those baddies and, perhaps more importantly, listen to them - that I would feel a certain sympathy with some of their views, I would not have believed it.

When I left, I still felt that there had to be a better way to treat these animals than through their live export. I also felt that some people had highlighted ideas that might lead to those ways being found. I had a lot more understanding of the needs, frustrations and methods of those in the animal business. I also had to accept that some of the causes I had felt strongly enough to protest over were not even correct. I had learned a lot during the course of the evening.' ■

Challenging Fixed Ideas and Prejudices

CAMEOs are about discovery, and we can only make such discoveries by facing challenges which are outside our normal experience. National Development Officer for CAMEOs, David Harrison, writes about two recent training events which deliberately tackled contentious subjects. The first of these was entitled *Men and Women* and considered the relationship between the sexes. The editor was among those who attended this CAMEO, which was specifically for people needing to understand how to set up and lead such Methods - and found it interesting that it seemed to reveal the fact that, as a society, we expect women to be prejudiced against - which is why women are often defensive, with a low self-esteem. Men tend to be encouraged to be competitive from an early age and have more general confidence in their ability.

The second CAMEO, which was also a training event, used the title *Sleaze* to cover a wide range of topics that involve some form of exploitation. The question was repeatedly asked, 'who is being exploited and by whom?' It is an unlikely topic for *Point three*, but the subject proved a valuable point of discussion and certainly most women feel deeply threatened by the degradation of women in magazines and films. We welcome members' comments about this subject.

Men and Women



This CAMEO looked at the relationship between the sexes and was organised by Lee Collins of Bristol CAMEO Group. Lee comments: 'People look at my name and assume that they are going to meet a man - after all, Lee is also a man's name. I sometimes see people double-take when they actually meet me, which seems to imply that they would approach me in one way if I were a man and in a completely different way because I am a woman. I liked the idea of a CAMEO which would give a group of people time to consider the importance of their gender.'

Lee gave the group an exercise to complete, which involved collecting and swapping sets of coloured paper in the same manner as you would collect spades or diamonds in a hand of cards. The individuals then

had to give the cards to Lee and she awarded them points. It soon became apparent that she was awarding the women hundreds of points, while the men were given a paltry few, and sometimes none at all, for collecting the same cards. Inevitably the men became confused and frustrated, sometimes even angry. Perhaps these were similar emotions to those of the thousands of women who are similarly prejudiced against in the workplace and often patronised, and indeed often do the same job as men but only receive a proportion of their pay. It was through exercises like this that the group began to consider how it really felt to be treated unfairly because of gender. The exercise was the catalyst for change - what started as an interesting discussion led the participants to face the challenge of changing their outlook and attitudes. Video tape was used to record some of the CAMEO.

Sleaze

The second CAMEO took 'Sleaze' as its title. This is a word that is often used by the media but what exactly does it mean? The dictionary describes it as *sordid*, and we tend to associate it with deceit, manipulation and dishonesty - the world of lies. The participants were first asked to give quick 'top of the head' answers to a list of questions



related to the subject. On the second day of the CAMEO, the public relations manager of *Ann Summers*, Jacque Wilson, spoke to the group about her work. *Ann Summers* ranks among the top 200 most profitable UK companies, through its business 'selling sexy things'. The company has a turnover of more than £40 million, which is mainly from lingerie sales (76 per cent of its income) through *Ann Summers Parties*. These sell goods in people's homes and average around 4,500 a week, with more than 7,000 women working as self-employed organisers for these sales outlets.

The group had expected to see an assertive power-dressed business woman. In fact Jacque was rather quiet, pleasant and very approachable. The five tough questions the group had planned

and agreed to ask, melted away as it listened to Jacquie's prepared talk. She associated Ann Summers with High Street stores and we all giggled as she showed us samples of skimpy rubber clothing and latest designs from the new 'Twice as Sexy' range. Jacquie's professionalism had been very subtle. She was ideally suited to her job.

With the end of the CAMEO in sight, the group continued to struggle for an agreed definition of sleaze, but inevitably it wasn't really this definition that was important. When the group paused to reflect, it became apparent that individuals had begun to let go of the safe old ways of thinking to make room for new and more considered understandings and insights.

Many good organisations offer the opportunity to become more committed to beliefs and values. But

Toc H remains remarkable in its attempts to encourage individuals on their own personal 'journey of discovery', while continuing to hold the fine balance between this personal growth and the recognition that we all spend our lives in groups. All personal growth must relate to the communities in which we live. The balance between personal and community development was the genius of Toc H at its start, and is the sure focus of every Toc H CAMEO today. This consistency of approach remains the strength of the Movement and the inspiration for CAMEOs. If you would like to know more about a Toc H CAMEO, or if you would like to set one up, please do contact me.

David Harrison

National Development Officer for CAMEOs

Tel: 0117 9427852 ■

BRANCH NEWS

Welcome to 11 New Members:

Adele Heafield, Joan Pearce (Ashby-de-la-Zouch)

Terence Lewis (Buckingham)

Ethel Guest (Codsall)

Enid Nichols (Hoddesdon)

Peter Preston (Holyhead)

Susan Carter, Norah Cooper, Elsie King (Sheaf, Sheffield)

Robert Black (Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay)

Judith Handy (Station)



Ruby Relf MBE, receiving her Long Service Award during a service at All Hallows.



Swindon and Wroughton Branch have marked Toc H's 80th birthday by opening their room in Wroughton for exhibitions and coffee mornings throughout the year. David Pope writes that the room was open on 4 February from 10 am to 4 pm for an exhibition of local and national projects, and again on 4 March for a coffee morning which raised nearly £50. The branch has received a lot of support from the local community and the publicity which subsequently appeared in the local press has brought three former members back in contact.

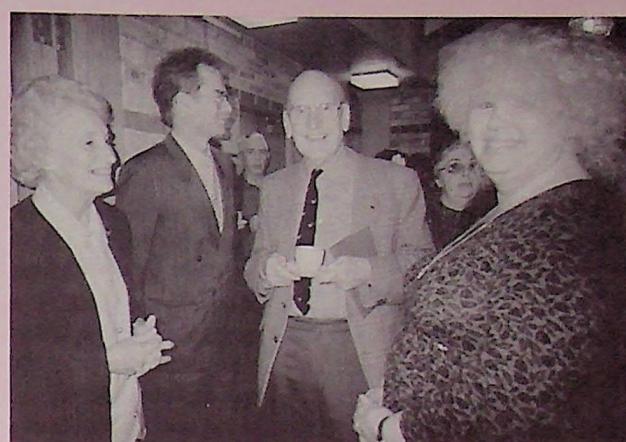
Chris Williams, **Chairman West Midlands and South Wales Region**, who recently received a *Certificate of Merit from the Samuel Whitbread Awards* on behalf of the Cannock Chase Focal Point, reports that the follow-up of volunteers helping with the Cannock Chase project has been a District priority and has been ably assisted by Development Officer, Simon Cottingham. The new **Bilston Group** is the first registered group to emerge from the follow-up programme and there are also embryo groups at Wednesfield and Penn, and another group planned for Walsall later this year. Chris says: '*This new group has the makings of an ideal branch - its members boast a mixture of skills, backgrounds and ages. They are committed and eager to develop Toc H in their community and recently joined Wednesfield Branch for a most enjoyable social evening. The atmosphere was such that an outsider looking-in could be forgiven for thinking that we were all life-long friends. Welcome to the family, Bilston - may you find fulfilment in your membership!*'

Visitors from Siberia entertained by Toc H

Toc H in Birmingham are celebrating the 80th birthday by passing on some of their experience and skills as practising Christians to a group of Christians from Novosibirsk, Siberia. They are hosting the group from the end of May and the whole of June. As they move around the country, seeing Toc H in action, Chris Williams says that she is sure that members will all give them a warm Toc H welcome. Chris adds, 'I'm currently trying to raise £3,000 to cover the cost of the visit. If any branches would like to make a donation as part of your acknowledgement of 80 years as a Movement, I would be very grateful. It is hoped that, as the church in Novosibirsk grows, the visitors will be able to introduce the Toc H ethos into their communities.'

News from Australia

Herbert Eliyathamby writes that Toc H Australia celebrated 70 years of Toc H in Victoria with a most successful *Share the Peace* buffet dinner at Parkville, Victoria, on the evening of 16 March. Herbert writes: 'This was a dinner for members, past members and friends of Toc H - Ray Geise and David Hall were able to be present - and the turnout was far beyond my expectation. We were delighted to include Peter Jardin, the last ADC to Tubby Clayton. Further celebrations will include the 8 August unveiling of a Toc H plaque by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Richard McGarvie, our Patron.'



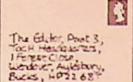
Somerset District's 80th Birthday Celebration Concert. Congratulations to Len Sebright and his small committee for such an enjoyable evening of music held in the auditorium of Queen's College, Taunton. The programme included a great variety of musical talent - The Taunton Male Voice Choir, a sextet of young clarinetists and the Castle School Jazz Band. 'A most memorable evening; enthusiastically appreciated by the audience with a standing ovation and a great start to the 80th Birthday Celebrations for the South West Region', writes Daphne Dawes, Chairman.



Legacies to Toc H for the year ending 31 March 1995 totalled £229,839. This money has helped to fund new Toc H work in Plymouth and Cheshire as well as supporting the general development of CAMEOs, Projects, Friendship Circles and Branch work.

For more information on legacies please contact Mike Lyddiard, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT

Your Letters



Toc H Needs a Focus

I very much appreciated the comments in the Focal Point article in *Point three*, March, particularly the closing paragraph about our need for a clearly defined focus, which entirely echoed my own sentiments. Many of us find it difficult to put across to outsiders the aims and activities of Toc H. This undoubtedly hinders interest, and consequently the likelihood of their joining us for eventual membership - which we so urgently need because of our high age composition.

Should we therefore stress some part of our activities to encourage interest? In PR terms this would undoubtedly give us a higher profile. You can spend all the money in the world on PR, but it will be ineffective unless there is something tangible to focus on in the first place. My own choice would be for work to reduce unemployment and to help those who are unemployed.

Gerry Ashfield, Uckfield

Norfolk Project Volunteers Reunion

To celebrate the 80th birthday of Toc H, the Norfolk Activities Committee are trying to contact all volunteers who have helped them on projects in Norfolk over the past 30 years.

A grand reunion of these volunteers is being planned to take place on Sunday 24 September at East Dereham, Norfolk.

If any reader has participated in a Norfolk Activities project in the past, or knows of anyone who has been such a volunteer, would they please contact me.

Olive Tennant, 90 Gunton Lane, New Costessey,
Norwich NR5 OAG

Look Back with Fondness

Thank you for printing my letter in January's *Point three*. I have been delighted with the response. The first two replies came *air mail* from New Zealand and arrived on 16 and 18 January! It is good to know that our New Zealand friends receive *Point three* so promptly and read it as soon as it arrives! Phone calls and letters from the UK have also been most encouraging.

Thank you all for reviving so many happy and amusing memories.

Freda Parker, Rushden

Peace, Reconciliation and Understanding

I joined Toc H last year after a visit to Talbot House with Revd Alan Johnson, because I was deeply moved and impressed by the work Toc H has done over the past 80 years.

For me, as a Jew, it was a very big step to take, but I felt that, in a world divided by suffering and strife, the work Toc H is doing is so important that I wanted to make public my commitment to it, by joining the organisation and preaching about it in my own synagogue and in one of the local churches where I was invited as a guest. Without exception, people were inspired by hearing about the work that Toc H does in so many different areas.

Having understood Toc H to be a Movement dedicated to bringing peace, reconciliation and understanding between different groups, I was shocked and confused to read an article in *Point three*, April, which was full of misunderstandings and, what seemed to me, to be real prejudice against Judaism. I am referring to the article *Back to Basics* by Bishop Derek Rawcliffe. For example, the Bishop repeats a story in which Jesus is criticised for breaking the Sabbath by healing on the Sabbath day. In reality, as Jews, we are taught that the sanctity of life takes precedence over all other things, and so one is actually obligated to break the Sabbath in order to save life.

An even more unfortunate paragraph was the one entitled *Jesus confronts the Jews*. In it the Bishop quotes *Jewish law* as teaching that one contracts ritual impurity by touching a gentile. I am delighted to correct this misapprehension, which would be distressingly racist if, God forbid, it were true. Perhaps the extent of the misunderstanding can be demonstrated by quoting *actual Jewish law*, which obliges us to help gentiles as we would Jews - *mip'nei darkhei shalom - for the sake of good neighbourliness*. In fact the Hebrew bible says 37 times that we should love the stranger as we love ourselves, because we were strangers in the land of Egypt.'

Rabbi Helen Freeman
London

Back to Basics

I very much enjoyed the article, **Back to Basics**, by Bishop Rawcliffe in April's *Point Three*. We listen to so many hollow words nowadays that it was a tonic to read his unpretentious and sincere statements - refreshingly devoid of the platitudes and rhetoric that so often prevents us from 'seeing the wood from the trees'.

Robert Higham, Dalry

Tributes

We regret to announce the death of the following members

In January	Doreen Osborne (Falmouth)
In February	Hudson Mortimer (Kennington)
In March	Roy Banks (Barkingside) Frances Bennett (Huddersfield) Albert Conde (Rhyl North) E Mary Davies (Leominster) Nesta Davies (Late Liverpool) Joan Perrott (Late Sherborne) Frank Groves (Lyme Bay) Joseph Pope (Late West Derby) Edward Porter (Gorleston) George Read (Kennington) Dorothy Reed (Newport, Gwent) Florence Rudd (Late Derby District) Phill Turley (Looe) Reginald Ward (Late Fareham) Francis Willeard (Late Gorleston)
In April	Arthur Jackson (Great Harwood) John Taylor (Great Harwood)

Not previously recorded

Edward Armstrong
(Late Gloucester South District)
Herbert Brown (Wolds District)
Ranco Joubot (South Africa)
James Kenyon (Great Harwood)
Thomas Phelps (Loughborough)
Leonard Roberts (Wolds District)

For many members **Alastair Muir** may have seemed a remote figure, chairing Central Council between 1989 and 1992 in his usual business-like manner. Those on the Central Executive Committee and at Headquarters, who worked closely with him, saw a very different man. Alastair brought a long experience to his chairmanship of Toc H, from his long period of work with ICI, latterly as a director, and then as PR Officer for the National Trust. More than this business experience, Alastair brought personal qualities which are less easy to describe. His love of music - playing the violin and the recorder - illustrates something of his sensitivity and his love of the Arts. Being a lay reader at his church in Weston Turville was more than an intellectual assent to Christian faith, it gave him the opportunity both to explore the difficult questions of belief, to share those thoughts with others, and most of all demonstrated his commitment to people. In Toc H he found an environment where his skills and sensitivity could be put to good use. He also found that Toc H gave him more than he could measure through the friendships that he made. A member since 1981, he was co-opted to the CEC in November 1987. He then became Chairman in 1988 and immediately began the work in CEC and with wider consultation which led to the formulation of those policies which have now become the foundation stones of Toc H for the 90s and into the next millennium. Without his leadership during those vital years we would not have been in the same position today - poised to revitalise Toc H as a vitally important Movement for our modern society. Following his retirement from the Chair in

November 1992, Alastair remained on the Finance and Properties sub-Committee and was fully prepared to become involved more locally in Toc H, particularly in Oxford. However, it was not so long after that that he was diagnosed as having cancer. The last two and a half years of his life were punctuated by periods of hospital treatment. Nevertheless, though these raised major questions for him about his faith, he faced those questions, and his own death, with courage and faith which were an inspiration to me and many around him. He maintained a good quality of life until just a couple of days before his death, when he went into a hospice in Berkhamsted. I was privileged to talk and pray with him on the day that he died, surrounded by members of his family. I shall miss his stimulating friendship. I give thanks for all that he was and all that he gave to Toc H, and to me. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Jane, and the rest of his family - Thomas, Sebastian, Elizabeth, Claire and Naomi. His funeral service was held at St Mary's Church, Weston Turville on 9 March, and the celebration of his life will be held in June. **JAJ**

Gorleston Joint Branch regret to report the sudden death on 19 March of **Edward (Teddy) Porter** at the age of 79. He had been a loyal member of Toc H for over 60 years and was also involved in the community, helping in his own special way. He was a great character and he and his familiar bike will be sadly missed by so many in the town.

BB

Roy (Monty) Banks died on 18 March having been a loyal member of Barkingside Branch for over 20 years. During this time he had proved a most reliable secretary until bad health forced him to relinquish the job four years ago. He was held in high esteem by the members, always willing to assist in anything that we were doing, and was a dedicated worker for the Movement in all he did. **HS**

Bert Conde, the longest serving member of Rhyl Branch, died peacefully in his sleep on 9 March. He was in his 99th year and was one of the earlier members of Rhyl South. Bert took an active part in setting up our children's holiday centre and later spent most of his retirement acting as Jobmaster with his friend, the late Dai Morgan. **TG**

Nesta Davis, who died on 12 March aged 92 years, was a member of Liverpool Branch for over 30 years and recently became a Builder. She was District Treasurer for some years and a very loyal member of the branch. Nesta was a lovely lady and always very interested in Toc H work and will be sadly missed by us all. **GE**

Frank John Willeard died on 23 March, a founder member of Beccles Branch and later of Bradwell and Gorleston Branches. He was a quiet and popular member, interested in all social activities, particularly the welfare of the blind, and was one of the original members of *Grapevine*, the talking newspaper for the blind in Great Yarmouth. He will be sadly missed. **CAB**

Members of Huddersfield Branch are sad to announce the recent death of **Frances Bennett**, a Toc H member for over 60 years. Frances was a tireless worker for many causes and much loved by us all. Her courage and dignity were an inspiration to all who knew her. **PG**

People in Groups

Cuddesdon House - 17-19 October 1995

Another chance to take part in this popular and exciting event. The aim is to enable people to become more aware of how groups operate (group process) and of how they themselves behave in groups.

Cost to members is £15. This event is also open to people from outside Toc H.

For further details and an application form please write to: Janet Graves, Training Department, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT

Toc H Leeds District 80th Birthday Celebration Concert present the **Yorkshire Evening Post Band The Best in Brass**

at Ossett Town Hall on Saturday 24 June 1995
at 7 pm

Further details from:

Bill Bains, 28 Rockingham Road,
Pendas Fields, Leeds LS15 8UL

Tel: (0532) or (0113-2) 640256

Ferry Challenge '95

To celebrate Toc H's 80th birthday, member Jim Simpson is undertaking a journey from Southampton to Hull - but with a difference! Jim's challenge is to see how many different crossings of the English Channel and North Sea he can make in a week. If you can help with sponsorship, transport, link in with your event in September '95, or simply offer a cup of tea and support, please contact:

Toc H Ferry Challenge
142 Jubilee Crescent, Wellingborough, Northants
NN8 2PG Tel: 01933 227701

Celebrating Toc H's 80th Birthday

A Garden Party will be held at Headquarters,
1 Forest Close, Wendover,
on Saturday 24 June 1995, between 2 pm and 5 pm.
All are welcome, put a note in your diary!

'Lifestyles' CAMEO

at Cuddesdon House, Near Oxford

7-8 October 1995

The Criminal Justice Act accentuated the clash of Lifestyles that occurs between those who travel and those who lead more settled lives. This CAMEO, for which we plan to bring together travellers of different types, farmers, house-owners, police and others, will look at the points of conflict between these lifestyles. We shall explore the stereotypes which encourage prejudice, and listen to people's personal experiences. We shall seek to find common ground to celebrate as well as recognising genuine differences of outlook and values.

As most participants will be from the Oxford area, the event is NOT residential. However, a FEW places are available for people from other parts of the country (and we might be able to find an overnight bed with local members).

Cost £25

To apply, send a booking fee of £10 (cheques payable to Toc H), to John Mitchell, 94 Burcott Lane, Bierton, Aylesbury HP22 5AS

Prideaux House - Family Reunion and Great Banquet Saturday 3 June 1995

To mark the 33rd Anniversary of the opening of Prideaux House by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, a very special Open Day will be held from 11 am to 6 pm on 3 June.

For further details please contact:

Revd Gualter de Mello, Prideaux House, 10 Church Crescent, London E9 7DL Tel: 0181 986 6000

North Wales and North West Region

A celebration of 80 years of Toc H

Nantwich Church

Saturday 3 June 1995

Service at 3 pm

followed by tea and an evening concert.

Further details from:

Cyril Carrier: 01270 582870

Old Colwyn Methodist Church

Saturday 23 September 1995

Service at 4 pm

followed by tea and an evening concert.

Further details from:

David L Williams: 01492 530175

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to Point three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Falmouth Toc H Holiday House

Accommodation for 5 plus cot.

Open June to September

Enquiries Ron Gatiss - Tel: 0326 312689